

Beans, Beans, Beans

We're **full of beans** in this issue. Why? Because they are healthy, cheap, easy and versatile.

Healthy

Beans are good ammunition for many diseases and chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity, heart disease, cancer.

Beans are protein-rich, and it is high quality protein without fat and cholesterol – unlike meat. Beans are a healthy substitute for meat. And beans are great for a fat-restricted diet.

Beans are high in fibre. The soluble fibre in beans helps lower cholesterol and also prevent sugar levels from rising too rapidly after a meal – which makes beans a particularly good food choice for people with diabetes, insulin resistance or hypoglycemia. The insoluble fibre in beans helps with digestion and elimination.

Beans are full of complex carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates don't contribute to weight gain but provide your brain and muscles with stable, long lasting energy.

Beans are loaded with vitamins and minerals: vitamin B1-6, 9,12 (good for your memory and heart); potassium, magnesium, folate (good for your heart); iron (good for energy); calcium (senior adults need more calcium for their bones); manganese and copper (good for creating antioxidants, and copper is necessary in creating the substance and flexibility of blood vessels, bones and joints). These nutrients act on many parts of the body and are key for overall health promotion.

Beans have calories. Depending on the type of bean, it ranges from 100 – 150 calories for ½ cup of beans. But when you consider how nutrient-dense beans are, they provide great food value for these few calories. (Two Timbits are 140 calories; one 12 oz can of Coke is 155 calories. We rest our case.)



Beans and rice are a food staple all over the world, mixed together or served side by side, a full meal in itself or a side dish.

Beans are low in one essential amino acid which rice has, and rice is low in another which beans have. Together they provide a complete protein with all the essential amino acids which are the foundation for human life and growth.

This food combination is so perfect that it gives rise to expressions like “they’re just like rice and beans” or “just do the rice and beans and you’ll have success.”

These two ingredients are featured in traditional dishes all over the world: Indian, Chinese, Korean, Middle Eastern, Cajun, Caribbean, Mexican and the list goes on.

Cheap

Our newsletter staff went to Bulk Foods and Price Chopper at the Bridletowne Mall.

Many common dried beans at Bulk Foods are \$0.36/100 grams, so 1 cup of beans weighing 200 grams would cost \$0.72. When cooked, it will yield 2.25-2.5 cups of beans (or 3 cups if lentils). This is very cheap compared to other quality foods.



Nutrition Facts/Valeur nutritive	
Per 250 mL (160g) / Par 250 mL (160g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	180
Fat / Lipides	0.5 g 1 %
Saturated / saturés	0.1 g 1 %
+ Trans / trans	0 g 1 %
Sodium / Sodium	550 mg 23 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides	32 g 11 %
Fibre / Fibres	8 g 32 %
Sugar / Sucres	0 g
Protein / Protéines	12 g
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	4 %
Calcium / Calcium	4 %
Iron / Fer	25 %

What about canned beans you ask? They are good too, although more expensive. This can of red kidney beans from Bulk Foods is \$0.97. Different brands at Price Chopper range from \$0.89-\$1.29. But remember: Canned foods contain salt as a preservative which is bad for high blood pressure. This can of kidney beans has more than ¼ of your daily recommended intake of salt, so rinse the beans.

Easy

Making beans from scratch is as easy as “1-2-3” and they taste better than canned beans:

- 1 Soak the beans in a dish or pot of water overnight
- 2 Rinse and boil at low heat for about an hour
- 3 Rinse and use, as a cold or hot ingredient

Lentils only need to be soaked for about 10 minutes, so they are handy if you didn't remember to soak any beans.



Versatile

The great thing about beans is that you don't have to know that much. Different beans do have different tastes; benefit from different spices; complement different foods. But if you're not a real bean gourmand, you can use them pretty interchangeably. Stick with one bean like Navy beans (so called because they were the staple food of the United States Navy a century ago) or mix up a batch of dried beans to have on hand like: Navy, Pinto, Kidney, Black Turtle, Great Northern, Adzuki, Chickpeas (also called Garbanzo).

Cooked beans store well in the refrigerator for a week. Cook up a bigger batch and use them as you want them for salads or as ingredients in other dishes all week: bean salads, in soups, casseroles, chile.

Beans are super healthy, super cheap and super easy to prepare and add to food. *What's not to like?* Well, many people find beans make them gassy. Start gradually and increase your bean consumption over time. Your body gets used to them. Some people also say that rinsing the beans before and after cooking in cold water helps, and there are popular products like Beano.